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Mary Kom reacts after loss on Thursday | AP | P15, 16

INDIA IN DIFFERENT QUARTERS IN TOKYO

Top performances in archery, badminton, hockey raise nation's hopes at Olympics

MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM, ARCHER ATANU STUN FAVOURITES

Men's hockey team beat defending champions Argentina 4-1 to march into quarters and archer Atanu Das stunned two-time Olympic champion Oh Jin Hyek from South Korea to enter pre-quarters. Rio Olympics silver medallist PV Sindhu also advanced to the quarters after beating Mia Blichfeldt. Satish Kumar, India's first super heavyweight (+91 kg) to compete in the Olympics, in last eight after win

HEARTBREAK FOR MARY KOM

- Multiple world champion and London Olympic medallist Mary Kom lost her flyweight (51 kg) prequarterfinal bout against Colombia's Ingrit Valencian. She said she did not realise she lost after winning last two of the three-round bouts
- Shooter Manu Bhaker is fifth after first stage of qualification

26
NUMBER OF INDIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS FROM FRIDAY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Officials inspect Pegasus office near Tel Aviv

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

AMID mounting international pressure to probe the widespread abuse of the Pegasus spyware, Israeli authorities inspected the offices of NSO Group near Tel Aviv, which owns the military grade cyberwar tool.

The inspection happened on Wednesday around the time Israeli Defence Minister Benny Gantz was in Paris to discuss the matter with his French counterpart, as the latter country's President Emmanuel Macron's mobile numbers figured in a leaked database of NSO's possible surveillance targets.

For its part, NSO said defence ministry officials probing the complaints had 'visited' and not 'raided' its premises.

While most countries affected by Pegasus, including France and Hungary, have been pressuring Israel to come clean, it is a mystery that the Indian government does not see the surveillance of hundreds of academics, journalists, activists, politicians and victims of sexual violence, as a matter of national security.

But, pressure is mounting on the judiciary to order a probe, as over 500 individuals and groups have written to Chief Justice of India N V Ramana seeking his immediate intervention.

27% OBC quota for med AIQ seats

10% reservation also carved out for the EWS category; applicable from this admission season

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

FOLLOWING an year-old Madras High Court ruling and pressure from the Supreme Court, the Centre on Thursday announced 27% reservation for OBCs and 10% for the economically weaker section (EWS) of students for undergraduate and postgraduate medicine and dental courses under the All-India Quota (AIQ) scheme.

Under the AIQ scheme, 15% UG and 50% PG seats are kept domicile-free in government medical and dental colleges, against which students from other states can be offered admission, while the rest of the seats are reserved for students from within the state.

The Madras High Court had last week said there will be no admission in medical colleges this year without implementing the AIQ reservation. It had on July 27 last year directed the Union health ministry to set up a committee to workout the quota arithmetic within three months, but the process got stalled, resulting in a rap from the Supreme Court in recent weeks.

Decision to benefit 5,550 students

The decision would benefit nearly 1,500 OBC students in MBBS and 2,500 OBC students in PG while it will also impact around 550 EWS students in MBBS and around 1,000 EWS students in PG medicine

The new quotas will be applicable from the current academic session. The proposal was approved at a meeting chaired by the prime minister on Monday.

AIQ was introduced in 1986 under the direction of the Supreme Court to provide for domicile-free merit-based opportunities to students from any state to aspire to study in a good medical college located in another state.

To begin with, there was no quota in AIQ. But in 2007, the Supreme Court allowed reservation of 15% for SCs and 7.5% for STs, after which OBCs sought a level playing field.

When the Central educational institutions (reservation in admission) Act became effective in 2007 providing for uniform 27% reservation to OBCs, it was implemented in all centrally run medical colleges but was not extended to AIQ seats of state medical and dental colleges.

The Centre had in 2019 introduced 10% reservation for EWS. Seats in medical and dental colleges were raised over two years ago so that the seat count for other general category students does not go down.

MAKEN
CONG GENERAL SECY HOLDS TALKS IN RAJ

Congress general secretary Ajay Maken held one-on-one discussions with Rajasthan Congress MLAs for the second day here on Thursday. Ahead of the expected Cabinet reshuffle, Maken is holding talks with party legislators to take feedback on the performance of the Congress government in the state | P10

Bommai in Delhi today to meet PM, decision on cabinet likely next week

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Hubballi, Bengaluru

TWO days after taking oath as Chief Minister, Basavaraj Bommai will be visiting New Delhi on Friday to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, other Union ministers and MPs from Karnataka. However, the issue of cabinet formation may not be on the discussion table for now, as the CM, who is currently heading a one-man government, indicated that it will take some time and he will visit Delhi again to discuss the matter.

"This is my first visit as Chief Minister and it will be to greet them and take their blessings," Bommai said. He added that the PM had spoken to him on Wednesday and expressed hope of good governance in the state. Commenting on cabinet formation, the CM said he will visit Delhi again sometime next week when the composition of the cabinet will be discussed and names finalised.

Meanwhile, his predecessor B S Yediyurappa told reporters on Thursday that he will not interfere in the cabinet formation or administration. "Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai is capable and he will decide on it. I have even told my followers not to contact me for any work and to approach Bommai himself as he is now the CM of Karnataka," Yediyurappa said.

Regarding the apprehensions among the turncoats who had joined the BJP to help the party form its government, Yediyurappa said he will talk to Bommai, but added that the latter will decide on it. He also said will visit Gundlupet in Chamarajanagar district on Friday and call on the family of Ravi who committed suicide a day after Yediyurappa resigned. P4

Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai inspects the Barekalache-Kaiga road and the collapsed bridge, which was damaged in the floods, in Yellapur on Thursday | EXPRESS

WILL NEW CM GET NEW TEAM WITH NEW FACES?

With Karnataka getting a new CM, the question now remains who will make it to the Basavaraj Bommai cabinet. Several MLAs, who were ministers in the Yediyurappa cabinet, are unlikely to make it. "Leaders are keen on bringing those who were denied berths earlier," a source said. P4

NATIONWIDE	JULY 28	JULY 29
Fresh cases	43,654	43,509
Recoveries	41,678	38,465
Deaths	640	640

KARNATAKA	JULY 28	JULY 29
Fresh cases	1,531	2,052
Recoveries	1,430	1,332
Deaths	19	35

JAB-O-METER
TAKE YOUR SHOT
July 28 39,42,457 doses
July 29 46,52,914 doses
TOTAL DOSES 45,55,02,438

Steady Covid case spike may see return of curbs

CHETANA BELAGERE @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA may soon some of the Covid-19 restrictions being brought back, prompted by concerns in the increase in the number of new cases in some neighbouring states, especially Kerala. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), set up by the State Government, is scheduled meet this weekend and decide on actions to be taken to prevent an increase of cases in Karnataka.

"We should not underestimate the Delta variant even with a 1 per cent positivity rate. We saw the numbers go up exponentially to 30 per cent in a span of just a few weeks. The Delta variant is highly transmissible. We have to bring in certain restrictions and keep a watch on the positivity rate. As of now, it is close to 1.5 per cent, but with the Delta variant, it won't take long to spread," explained Dr Vishal Rao, Dean, Centre for Academic Research, HCG Hospitals, and member of Genome Sequencing Committee. He says that right now, the state is inching close to a positivity rate of 5 per cent and when it touches the mark, all social gatherings and outdoor entertainment will have to be stopped. "We are seeing a surge in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Maharashtra, so, at this juncture, we cannot say Karnataka is different. We are in an island in the Delta ocean," Dr Vishal surmised.

CONTINUED ON: P7
K'TAKA SEES 34% JUMP IN FRESH COVID CASES: P3

DOZENS OF MONKEYS FOUND STUFFED IN SACKS, MANY DEAD

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru, Hassan

ABOUT 60 Bonnet Macaques were found mysteriously stuffed in gunny bags and dumped on the Belur-Sakleshpur road near Chowdanahalli village in Hassan district late on Wednesday night.

Some villagers found about 15-20 sacks thrown on the muddy road around 10pm and, upon opening them, they were shocked to find Bonnet Macaques (monkeys). Local wildlife volunteers and other villagers rushed to the spot and found the monkeys, some dead, some alive but badly bruised. While some of the locals tried to call the forest and police department officials for help, others attended to the monkeys by offering food and water.

"It was only after daybreak that officials from the police and forest department arrived. By that time, many more monkeys had died as their condition was serious. We have never seen such a pathetic sight before. We even called the deputy commissioner for help, but to no avail. In each sack, there were at least five monkeys," said a local.

The dead monkeys being buried in Hassan district on Thursday | EXPRESS

Members of Karnataka Prani Daya Sangha, who also helped the locals and forest department in the rescue and treatment efforts, demanded a detailed investigation. They also announced a reward for the person who helps find the culprits.

Hassan Deputy Conservator of Forests Dr K N Basavaraja told *The New Indian Express* that 36 monkeys had died, 15 escaped after preliminary treatment and the condition of one is very serious. P7

HC to monitor judge hit-and-run

MUKESH RANJAN @ Ranchi

TAKING suo motu cognizance of a CCTV footage that showed an autorickshaw intentionally running over Dhandbad Additional District and Session Judge Uttam Anand, killing him on the spot, the Jharkhand High Court on Thursday called it a direct attack on judiciary.

The HC asked state police to probe the incident thoroughly and get to the bottom of the case, while keeping the court updated on the progress. The footage showed the auto hitting the judge, who was on his morning walk, from behind on a deserted road on Wednesday. The shocking incident was also brought to the notice of the Supreme Court on Thursday by SC Bar Association President Vikas Singh, who sought a CBI inquiry. However, the SC did not entertain it saying the Jharkhand HC has already taken up the matter.

CCTV footage showing judge Uttam Anand (inset) being hit by an autorikshaw

Police have arrested two persons and the vehicle has also been recovered.

During the hearing, the court observed such incidents have never taken place even when Maoist activity was at its peak in the state. It noted the incident is a reflection of the poor law and order situation, which has emboldened criminals to execute such a crime in broad day light.

The HC accepted DGP Neeraj Sinha's proposal to get the case investigated by a Special Investigation Team. P10

EXPRESS READ

GST rate structure rationalisation soon: CEA

NEW DELHI: The Centre is seriously planning to simplify GST into a three-rate slab regime, Chief Economic Adviser K V Subramanian said on Thursday, adding that it is going to happen "very soon". "The three-rate structure is something... definitely important and even the inverted duty structure (is) also equally important to actually fix. I think the government is definitely seized of the matter. So, we should hopefully see traction on that soon," Subramanian said. He was speaking at a virtual event organised by industry body Assocham | P13

WITH THIS ISSUE — CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE — 32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

FLOOD EFFECT

Not fans, but 'Sallu village' has long line of bachelors

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @ Gadag

TUCKED away about 59 km from Gadag town, Gadagoli, a small village in Ron taluk has earned itself the moniker of Salman Khan village - not for its macho men, but for its scores of bachelors who haven't been able to find a match over the last 10 years.

These men, mostly farmers, are now asking officials to request former minister C C Patil and local MLAs to help them find brides as families are not willing to marry off their daughters to this village nor other flood-affected places.

Dilapidated houses at Gadagoli village in Gadag district | EXPRESS

Though 500 houses were built in the new village a few years ago, they have not yet been allotted to the affected families. Marriage proposals are turned down as the prospective grooms do not have proper houses and they are living in dilapidated houses with no proper windows and doors. The farmers here have lands, but are suffering due to financial crisis caused by continuous droughts and floods which have been plaguing this region since the last two decades. A few wealthier men too have been unsuccessful in finding brides, given the condition of the village. But that has not been the case with girls from this village.

"There are about 120 men in the 30-40 age group who are unmarried. We are waiting for houses till today," a few youths said. A district official said, "A new village is ready, but some villagers refused to shift earlier and now the area is full of thorns and bushes. We will clean up the area and also repair some houses."

India to get back 14 of its stolen artworks from Oz

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

THE National Gallery of Australia (NGA) on Thursday announced its decision to return 14 artworks worth around $3 million from its Asian collection to India, as 13 were sourced from jailed smuggler Subhash Kapoor and one from New York-based art dealer William Wolff.

NGA director Nick Mitzevich said that returning the artworks is the right and culturally responsible thing to do. "We are grateful to the Indian government for their support and are pleased we can now return these culturally significant objects," he said. The handover will take a couple of months. Once done, NGA's collections will no longer have the Kapoor taint. Indian High Commissioner to Australia Manpreet Vohra said NGA's decision was a gesture of friendship. Some of the artworks that are being returned include bronze and stone sculptures. The museum had acquired them between 1989 and 2009.

COMING HOME

- Divine couple Lakshmi and Vishnu, 10th-11th century
- Letter of invitation to Jain monks; picture scroll, 1835
- Child-saint Sambandar, 12th century
- Dancing child-saint Sambandar, 12th century (pic)
- Portrait of donor and priests before ShriNathji, Udaipur, unknown date
- Guru Das Studio
- A Gandhi memorial portrait, 1941
- Processional standard, 1851
- Portrait of a man, 1954
- Goddess Durga slaying the buffalo demon, 12th-13th century
- Arch for a Jain shrine, 11th-12th century
- Seated Jina, 1163
- Maharaja Kishen Pershad Yamin, 1903
- Portrait of a woman, unknown date